

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

---



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney  
Carol C. Lam***

---

---

***For Immediate Release***

**NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - October 20, 2006**

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that the Department of Justice held its 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Executive Office for United States Attorneys Director's Awards Ceremony today, during which 154 award recipients were recognized for their excellence in law enforcement. Recipients included Assistant United States Attorneys, litigation and information technology support personnel, and others who have made outstanding contributions in federal, state and local law enforcement.

San Diego-based Assistant United States Attorneys Alana Wong, Peter Ko, Jason Forge, Phillip Halpern and Sanjay Bhandari, as well as Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Jamie Harrison, Internal Revenue Service Special Agent Maurice Hattier, Jr., and Defense Criminal Investigative Service Special Agent Sam Medigovich, are recipients of the 2006 Director's Awards.

Ms. Wong and Mr. Ko received the Director's Award for Superior Performance as Assistant United States Attorneys for their prosecution of eleven members of the San Diego Chapter of the Hells Angels

Outlaw Motorcycle Gang on RICO, VICAR, extortion and drug trafficking charges, to which the president, vice-president, sergeant-at-arms, secretary, treasurer and six additional gang members pleaded guilty.

Mr. Forge, Mr. Halpern and Mr. Bhandari, along with Mr. Harrison, Mr. Hattier, and Mr. Medigovich, received the Director's Award for Superior Performance by a Litigative Team for their investigation and prosecution of former Congressman Randall "Duke" Cunningham. The investigation resulted in the largest bribery case and the lengthiest sentence ever imposed on a sitting member of Congress.

“Today’s award recipients are honored for their extraordinary commitment to protecting our communities, promoting justice and preserving the civil liberties that make our country so great,” said Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales. “It is through their dedicated efforts and sacrifice that we are able to preserve justice for our communities, our nation and for future generations.”

While terrorism remains the top priority of the Department of Justice, the Department has continued its mission to enforce all of our Nation’s laws, including prosecuting civil rights violations, gang violence and drug crimes, as well as representing our client agencies, conducting civil enforcement, and assisting victims of crime. Key priorities addressed by the United States Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of California include terrorism, illegal immigration, drug smuggling, public corruption, corporate fraud, and Department of Justice initiatives addressing gun crimes (Project Safe Neighborhoods) and child obscenity and exploitation (Project Safe Childhood).

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam stated, “I am pleased that these Assistant U.S. Attorneys and Special Agents from the Southern District of California were selected as recipients of the distinguished Director’s Awards. The dedicated work by these men and women is admirable, and it is rewarding to have their fine work recognized by others.”

The Executive Office for United States Attorneys provides oversight, general executive assistance, an direction to the 94 United States Attorneys’ Offices around the country.